

The following is a brief reference to a work in progress, translated from the Italian, the extraordinary importance of which will become clear this year and in the next. It is a book whose idea, together with its rationale, broadens the horizons of almost all European problems into something hitherto unknown and invisible; whoever has read the book will see Europe differently. It is also the first far-reaching presentation of one of the basic spiritual drives that is effective in Europe today. Effective means: shaping epochs, encompassing, destroying, turning and aligning the feeling of being awake, it is the basic drive against history. In this respect alone, it is an eminently important book for Germany, for history is a specifically German problem, the philosophy of history an avowedly Germanic form of self-examination. Goethe is probably the only great German who never undertook a systematization of the historical process, who did not assign his scientific work to any historical subject. But if we think of Schiller, the classical historical poet and thinker, of the attempts at historical interpretation by the Romantics, of Hölderlin's yearning and epoch-laden dreams, of Kleist's political essays and letters, of Herder, Hegel, Ranke, Treitschke, and finally of the notorious series of modern philosophers of culture, we will understand Nietzsche's expression of the "consuming historical fever" that has seized us, or, from another mood, we will agree with Oncken, who, in a recent review of the nineteenth century, said in a lecture that in the German nation-state historicism in science and art had become a constructive element as in hardly any other people. And now suddenly a basic instinct against history? How is this to be understood? Let us consider two famous German essays on this subject, namely first Schiller's inaugural speech in Jena: "What does universal history mean and to what end does one study it" from the year 1789. Schiller is completely an evolutionist: once raw tribes of peoples - today our advanced culture, sad and shameful pictures of the beginning of our race: "Man began contemptuously" - "these savages" - namely: slavery, stupidity, superstition, lawless freedom, raw taste, "even his virtues filling us with disgust and pity": "so were we 11 and today: Enjoyment and work, peaceful possession, cities rich in people, wise laws, filled barns, miracles of diligence, "what light on all fields of knowledge" "finally our states, with what intimacy, with what art they are intertwined", "the European society of states seems to be transformed into one big fa-milie", and all this we owe to history, all this history teaches us, it "keeps the deserved olive wreath fresh and breaks the obelisk, it cures us of the exaggerated admiration of antiquity and of the childish longing for past times, it brings a reasonable purpose into the course of the world", it has led us from the "unsociable cave dweller" to the "intellectually rich thinker", to the "educated man of the world", it has led us into this hour which unites us here, into "our human century" - it was 1789. Let us hold against it the year 1873 and Nietzsche's essay "On the Usefulness and Disadvantage of History for Life". Here the turn against history is there. "We Germans feel in abstraction, we are spoiled by history." We have "the historical sickness." We are "the historically sick." There prevails "the historical education which knows only the word .becoming*", disguised into a "parodic deformity," a "grotesque grimace." The "modern fanatic of the process, drowned in the river of becoming," prevails, but the time will come "when no one will let the word world process slip across his lips without these lips smiling"-these "evasions of the historical sense." The unhistorical and the superhistorical are the natural antidotes against the overgrowth of life by the historical. If we find in Schiller's lecture the sentence that is so extremely interesting for our problem situation today: "The history of the world thus proceeds from a principle that is opposed to the beginning of the history of the world" - by which he means as this principle the thought, the spiritual urge for order, which he considers to be higher than the purely natural movement of events, of "history" -, then we find in Nietzsche the opposite evaluation: the science of history needs a higher supervision and monitoring: by the health doctrine of life: "Shall life rule over knowing. Shall cognition rule over life? No one will

doubt: life is the higher, the ruling power."

Two completely opposite views, then. But we do not want to weigh them against each other, we do not want to criticize Nictzsches concepts of life and health, these concepts, which he set as a limit for himself and his philosophy, while today we only respect and pay attention to them in his work, since he led them ad absurdum for our epoch-; We also want to disregard the intellectually offensive aspects of Schillcrsdien's philosophy of culture, presented as always in his magnificently pictorial prose, for which there are no comparisons at all in German essay writing; we want to take both essays only as remarkable /expressions of a position on the problem of history, as views of history, and now add a third, that of Evola from 1935. "We were like that," Evola also says, but he means the exact opposite as Schiller. For Evola, what Schiller and Nietzsche call history is positively barely present; it is what Europe in its descent tolerates as history. History, that is already the end. It is the modern world. According to Evola, it begins chronologically between the seventh and sixth century before Christ. What lies before, he calls the traditional world. Let's be clear about the time. It is the time between Homer and the Greek tragedy, before Salamis. In the East, it would be the century of Lao-tse. He thus sets the decline even earlier like Nietzsche, according to whom the decline of the soul begins with Socrates (470-399): "My old dislike of Plato, as antiantic, the .modern* soul was already there" (vol. 11, p. 71). According to Evola, before the decay lies the dark age of the Orient, the iron age of classical antiquity, the age of the wolf in the Nordic countries. This is the traditional world. Then the modern age begins, the relay stations within the decay are the fall of the Roman Empire and the beginning of Christianity, then the fall of the feudal-imperial world, then humanism and the Reformation. Evola distinguishes sharply between these two epochs of mankind, the first with the spirit of universal culture, the second after the "darkening of the gods", Ragnarok, the world with the profane culture, the cadaver ideology, the world of the old, decrepit, exhausted, the twilight man, the last man. He also carries out this dichotomy formally, his book is divided into these two parts. It is an anthropological theory of such sharp dualism as we know it from Schelling, for whom the whole world history is divided into two great periods, the centrifugal and the centripetal. Schelling is often quoted by Evola. The world of tradition - what is it then? First, a new evocative concept, not a naturalistic, historical concept, but a vision, a setting, a spell. It conjures up the world as universal, supernatural and extra-human, and this conjuring can only start from there and have an effect there, where still remains of this universality are present, thus already approaching it, grasping it, is exception, elitism, rank. In this concept the cultures free themselves from the human and the historical and transfer their principles of origin to a metaphysical level, where they are now to be reconstructed in a free state and result in the image of the early, high, the transcendent, the tradition man, the man who carries the tradition. The doctrine now of this early man is such that it must appear to the modern European, so far as he has at all the means of approaching it spiritually, as entirely cata- strophal, abnormal and destructive, for sic reads: there are two orders, a physical and a metaphysical; two natures: a lower and a higher; the lower is becoming, the higher is being. The forms of movement of the lower one are flow, restlessness, neediness, desirous becoming one, powerlessness to complete oneself; those of the being: discipline, purification, fasting, being in oneself, consecration. In other words, it gives the image of the original, traditional man, in principle of the man like this: Man is spirit, solitary, inescapable spirit. This is first of all, as I said, the vision, the magic of the book, but what is epochal about it is the material underpinning of this vision, the morphological siding of this vision by the cultures towards in fact: this is man, nothing else. The tradition, which gave the creation to man to carry, is called: spirit. Unchangeable, irreducible spirit,

spirit without becoming. Panta rhei – that is nature; man the measure of all things, that is spirit.

The measure of all things: kept in the rite, recognized in the sacrifice, carved in the boxes, construction principle of the sun thrones, on which the royal divinities rest as center, axis, turners of the wheel. These are the rulers of the early days, Solars, Olympians, foreign to them love, charity, humility, compassion, in the vastness of their spiritual powers there is still no I, nothing is "becoming", nothing is "working", seclusion, isolation are their attributes, the principles of spiritual centrality. There are two orders, one spiritual and one natural: the spirit, that is asceticism and form; the nature, that is the lack of limitation. There are two ranks: the spirit, that is the teaching of the nobles, "inaccessible to the commoners". The spirit calls itself in the tradition "free", "connoisseur", "glorious", "sovereign", it is inaccessible, from it the worlds rise. The traditionless, the non-spirit, the modernity bounces around in the worlds, to explore everything, to travel, to sprinkle, to smell -: Cook-universalism, talked up as Faustian and prometheian by the sleep- ingcar monnons, measured by the spirit anima- lic, prole manner, underworld, brain shrinkage. The tradition man is "sleepless spirit nature"; sun signs, uranic regions, entities of fire and lidite are his \erformations. Islands and mountain heights become to him as faces. "So we were." The descent was a potential one: the tension to the superbiological world gave way, it expressed itself morally: refinement, happiness, humanity were it. that seduced us, led us downward. In this Evola coincides with Nietzsche, but his historical-analytical perspective is different. For him, European history is not, as for Schiller, the finally gloriously completed flowering of the world spring, not, as for Nietzsche, the biological arena of the titans, the drive and hothouse of the great individuals, but what Europe claims to be history rests, to put it briefly, on a convention. This convention means: Let us not touch internationally certain questions to which we have no answer anymore and on whose non-answering the happiness of most of us is based. Let us spare happiness and peace. For this convention put aside, history would look like this, that a pretender comes to a throne like a cossack to a saddle, most naturally by catch, inheritance or force, nothing more of the motives of the world of tradition, consecration, sanctification and consecration, but for this the spirits of the times, the descent spirits, word-slingers rush over and dress him up with an ideology. The pretender enters the conceptual world, the economic forms weave him into their motives, the propagandists seize him, the cultural philosophers prove their talents on him. Alexander certainly knew nothing more than that he was setting his soldiers over an I'lub, nothing did he dream less than the Periclean dream, but after the victory the Stoics came from Alexandria and supplied him with the idioms for his battles, and what now triumphed was the Panhellenic idea. Charlemagne broke the treaty of Quierzy, that is, the agreements with the Pope, put himself outside the doctrine, committed fratricide, adultery, repudiated his wife, but then he conquered Pavia, and now the Lombard theologians came and declared that the Great Frankish power corresponded to the Augustinian divine state, and the Arnulfingian imperialism became the predestined Christian occidental victory. First the conquest, then idealism. But not even that always: the French case, the Corsican did not even bring cs to a new ideology: "toutes les gloires de la France" was already written before him on the palace wings of Versailles; a few boulevard breaks in the capital and the wide military roads in the country, that remained, the rest dissipated as extravagant physio- logy. So what is: there the old rule and here the young, on the right the androgynes and on the left the prohibitionists - back and forth, victories and losses, chance and necessity, robberies and sayings. Powder and posters -: two millennia of stupefaction, two millennia of descent, two millennia of "history".

In front of it, Europe puts itself and its convention, drapes itself with Schiller's fictions, veils itself with Nietzsche's biolo- gism, veils its fall from the super-biological world, its loss at the germ, its senseless periphciercn. its emptiness, its nothingness, its naked violence. In the tradi- tional world there was a

real relation between spirit and reality, between spirit and power, the victory was never accidental, the unfortunate always guilty; here with this sort of "history" everything is human, libidinal, explicable, excusable, or, to use the most sublime nineteenth-century obfuscation: dialectical.

Herniederbides, the history and its interpretation, sic is too much interpreted, not too deep. What remains for us today is only one thing: elitism, orders and silence, so about teaches this exclusive, aristocratic book. One is tempted to read out or into it that consciousness only appeared in order to establish differences in rank, to recognize high and low. There is low life and there is high life, there is valuable existence and there is unvaluable existence, a general "historical" existence does not exist at all. High and valuable life, that is always life with reference to universality, life with certainty in being, unwaveringness of the inner possession with deep knowledge of transformation; autonomous life, indifferent to the human; old life; turned back life. Low life, that is always greedy life, de-masculinized life, "becoming", forward and useful, based on the positions of power realization life. This difference of rank goes through the whole anthro- pology, also through the relation between man and woman: deadly devotion, thus love, ready for all annihilating blows, here – and there It, the One that is in itself, scepter-bearing and made of ice and light – sacral only between high types, the moaning of the little ones at each other is rankless, unlawful aberration, perverted.

So: A transcendent and a realization life! Yes or no! There are two worlds. Europe will have to recognize it. There is no more realization of the spirit in that state. That would be like regression of heat, against it stands the law of entropy. Greatness –, that is remembering, not acting. There is only the contemplating and the suffering spirit. Today and here. Thinking is suffering. This book makes it evident. Nietzsche did not yet grasp it or he veiled it, perhaps for the sake of his superhuman vision, not to disturb his dream, the last dream of the European "victorious". But it was not victorious, the process continued rapidly, dualism only intensified, it will continue to intensify, the dissolution is there. Agony of the peoples, final period of the earth. The penultimate stage has been entered. Truth and power of the lowest of the old castes is coming up, the mass world, the dark age Kaliyuga. What will the nations do? Well, they will continue to make history. Modern world. Darkening of the gods. But could it be otherwise? In the movements of Fascism and National Socialism, since they bring to bear their racially religious axiom, Evola sees possibilities of a fresh attachment of the peoples to the traditional world, beginnings of the production of real history, of new legitimacy for the relations between spirit and power (yes, on the background of the Evolian doctrine one sees very clearly the depth and the epoch-making of these movements); but beyond this single hope – could it be otherwise? Since man was obviously called forth by a creation which trusted him too much, left only few signs, few traces, and these point backward? And to the look backward, what answers him, what looks up? An eerie dark face looks up from the world of tradition, over the edge of things, over the fallow field, over the katalaunian realms: something human-warm, divine-good –? – no: Sphinx! A silence rises up, a behavior of desire and breath, haze of the pre-world, ancient ice, showers from cycles without number and without distance –, what speaks from this silence drowned sounds of desire. Pleasure, happiness.

Ambiguities, humanities –?, no, something absolute: spirit! Centrality Ens realissimum of Descartes, absolute possession of the I, absolute naked possession, reality bad, man: being, simple, separated, frightening, before which the gods are transient. Mortal enemy of history, unmarked, nameless cell, pure spirit. That looks up and that will save those who are in the order, those in elitism, in asceticism, those

in fasting. In monasteries, black monks, few, in an inextinguishable silence, in an irrevocable passivity, against it Trappists would act like dervishes. There they experience the end, the midnight. There they perform the office of connection and transmission of the germs of the living from one cycle to the other. Thanks to them, the tradition is present in spite of everything, the flame is burning. They are the awake ones, and when the times have come, they direct the forces of resurrection. This is not meant figuratively, but real in the sense and in terms of the methods of the tradition. This is how the book ends. Whoever has read it will be changed. This is how we are, and in whose name we die, we do not want to ask, in whose name we lived, we see here: in the name of tradition, of tradition from deep worlds, of distant cycles, of the great empire. "This is how we were" - and this is how we will be.